Howland Wood - Curatorial

Robertson, Robert - Death of, and Application of William L. Clark for ANS Asst. Curator

1937

Autobiography

~~The life (with many omissions)~~ of Robert Robertson.

He was born at Stockholm, Sweden, alive and naked in a house at the corner of Österlång gatan (Eastern long St.) and Slotts Backen (Palace Hill) just as the Parade passed up the Hill at 1.15 p.m. on Sunday Sept. 12, 1869. The son of the artist, later Boss-painter, Carl Robert Grönvall, from him he inherited a talent for painting, studied independently, mostly, and at the age of 14 was the youngest person who had ever been admitted to the National Museum for the purpose of copyeing, this according to the Curator Prof. Holm. Received praise from Zorn who told him "never to give up painting and you will land somewhere some day." He did! He landed in U.S.A. on July 8 1892 some time after Columbus, and was quick to learn that his familyname was not easyly pronounced, so he used the old-fashioned Swedish way of taking the fathers name and by adding "son", to make it a good-enough surname, Robertson = Son of Robert. Not knowing English enough to hurt, and only had had one year of French, the only thing that came to pass was German which he had studied since 9 years of age, one would think that a linguist like that would have a chance in U.S.A. it worked somewhat — he became "dritte Hand" in a "Platt deutsche Specerien Handel". — it is a long step from running around painting pictures, to sell potatoes etc. and having to deliver them too. Spring came at the right time the ~~next~~ next year, and then he got a job with the Brooklyn Watch Case Co. at a gold-rolling machine at a dollar a day, went on strike for higher wages, his demand for $1.25 was refused, staid home for three days, and was recalled — the Company had decided to pay the $1.25. Too many vacations on account of lack of orders made him quit as a unit in the art of making gold watches, became a freelance in decorating ceilings, little pretty angels, some call them Amorines, flowers and ornaments were put on dozens of Brooklyn's better homes. Many intervening jobs of all classifications until in 1901 he became a salesman in a better class ~~of~~ art-store where he sold frames or

retouched paintings, sometime even making them larger when the "Boss" had taking a wrong measurement, not being sufficiently paid for this his knowledge he quit, hired a Studio in Brooklyn, but selling paintings is a hard job, so he started in Commercial photography, as an amateur he had taken many prizes in Photography, also exhibiting in the "Ninth American Photographic Salon", work started to get slack so he sought and ~~a~~ got employment with the Intertype Co. as a first-class bench-hand (sic!) the War broke out and he became foreman with the Automatic Products Co. where he had 52 women and 22 young men to superwise making fuses for Canadian and U.S. 5 in Shells, worked there until the placed closed, when he was taken to the parent-company as Efficience inspector, left there to take up a position with a coin concern at half the salary previously received, on account of the more congenial work, left after a little more than a year as there was no prospect of getting a raise, started his own coin business, but had to give up on account of difficulties of procuring stock, was called to take a position as assistant curator with the American Numismatic Society early in the summer of 1927. He had been a coin collector since his eight year, and had assembled one of the finest collections of Swedish Coins in the World, having ~~been~~ several pieces not in the National Collection at Stockholm, this collection was sold to the American Numismatic Society in 1929 where it now has a permanent home, he has been a contributor to the Numismatist several times. Received the honor of being made a Knight of the Order of Vasa, first class, by ~~the~~ King Gustav V in June 1935. He died alive.

Requiem in Pace!

Priez pour Lui!

ROBERT ROBERTSON

Robert Robertson, assistant curator of the American Numismatic Society, at Broadway and 156th Street, died Friday night of heart disease at his residence, 140 Thirty-third Street, Brooklyn. He was a bachelor, 67 years old.

REV. CARL A. ANDERSON

GARDNER, Mass., Jan. 24 (AP).—The Rev. Carl A. Anderson, retired Swedish Baptist minister, died here today. His age was 69.

L 19

Deaths

ROBERTSON—Robert, Jan. 22, assistant curator American Numismatic Society. Funeral St. Rocco Church, 218 27th St., Brooklyn, 9:30 A. M. Tuesday.

ROSENFELD—Bianca Blum, at her late residence, Lawrence, L. I., beloved wife of Louis, devoted mother of George M. Notice of funeral later.

ROSS—On Jan. 22, Nora, of 507 West 113th

February 23, 1937

This memorandum is an effort to record the results of the activities of Robert Robertson, Assistant to the Curator, who died on January 22, 1937, after having been in the employ of the American Numismatic Society since 1927.

One of the reasons for Mr. Robertson's engagement involved additional protection for the Society's collection, and throughout his incumbency a consideration proportion of his time was expended in fitting our metal trays with a thin cardboard lining which occupied the portion of each tray not given over to the coin boxes, therefore permitting at a glance the discovery of the removal of any of the boxes or their contents.

This involved the orderly arrangement of the trays as an initial operation and the checking, correcting and frequently the re-labelling of the coin boxes. As a collateral objective, the coins were cleaned and lacquered and the very large section of our cabinet devoted to European and American coins have had this work completed.

The additions of the book references for the respective coins and the re-arrangements necessary because

of added material added to the effectiveness of the result.

Because of his experience as a photographer, we are indebted to Mr. Robertson for the selection of much of the equipment for our basement room in which the photography is done. The effectiveness of his work is evidenced by the growing demand for this service on the part of members and dealers.

Our collections have benefited through his expert knowledge; especially in the field of his native Swedish coin our collection probably surpasses any outside of Sweden. This condition was made possible through the transfer of his personal collection at considerably below cost. Upon virtue of this action, and because it involved a gift in excess of the minimum, the Council designated him a patron.

Realizing the weakness of our collection of modern bracteates, Mr. Robertson next turned his attention to forming a collection of these interesting pieces and this later was transferred to the Society at less than cost. A similar procedure marked the transfer of his collection of

coin scales, which forms one of the most attractive of our Museum's exhibits. It has not been possible to estimate how much the up-building of the collection owes to his constant seeking of pieces which filled gaps and many of these were acquired at a cost that was little more than their metal content. The trays devoted to Teutonic and North European coinages owe much to his knowledge of this special field.

Secretary

Mr. Robert Robertson, Assistant Curator of the American Numismatic Society, passed away suddenly at his home in Brooklyn, on January 22nd. He had been in poor health for some time but was able to attend to his duties up to the day before his death.

Mr. Robertson was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on September 12, 1869. He was the son of an artist, Carl Robert Grönvall, from whom he inherited a talent for painting. He studied art from an early age and at 14 was the youngest person who had ever been admitted to the National Museum for the purpose of copying. His father died while he was young and his mother married a second time and later came to this country. He followed in 1892.

Finding his name hard to pronounce in this country, he followed a Swedish custom of changing his name by adding "son" to his father's name. He found it extremely hard getting work that satisfied him in this country and assayed many different kinds of jobs. For many years he was a machinist in the Brooklyn Watchcase Company but was always endeavoring to associate himself with art or the art trade. He did much free-lance work in interior decorating, art "for art's sake", and photography.

At the time of the World War he was a foreman in the Automatic Products Company that was busy with munition products. Shortly after the War he was with Guttag Brothers and later went into the coin business for himself. He became associated as Assistant Curator with the American Numismatic Society in the summer of 1927 where he remained until his death.

From early childhood he was a collector. His interest in coins remained constant and he collected whenever he could afford to do so. He

formed one of the finest collections of Swedish coins in the world. This collection is now in the cabinet of the American Numismatic Society.

In 1935 the Swedish government conferred on him the decoration of Knight of the Order of Vasa, First Class, for his many donations to the national coin collection.

His interest in boys and their activities has always been keen. A resident of Brooklyn for many years he has been associated with the boys in his parish and had formed on two different occasions bands and drum copps, and in recent years took special delight in helping small boys of the parish better themselves, taking groups of boys on outings, etc.

His funeral was attended by a large number of the people in the parish. The Fife and Drum Corps and Boy Scout organizations led a parade from the funeral parlor to the church and then passed by his home.

30

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975 Woodycrest Avenue
New York, N. Y.

March 3, 1937.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
The American Numismatic Society
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Wood:

I hereby make application for the position of Assistant Curator in the Museum of the American Numismatic Society.

I greatly desire this appointment because of my love for the science of Numismatics and the immense opportunities which would be afforded to me for study and research.

I feel that my numismatic experience and certain other qualifications would enable me to fulfill the duties required of me as soon as I may become familiar with them. I have been a collector all my life, and of coins particularly during the last ten years. During this time I have been forming a general collection of the coins of the world, studying the historical and geographical series which such a collection must necessarily encompass. I have naturally learned a great deal about the attribution of foreign coins, particularly of Europe, and the languages used in the various legends. I have had some experience in cleaning coins and in the electrolytic process of removing corrosion. I have also some experience in photography and work with plaster casts. I am able with the aid of a dictionary to translate slowly French, German, Italian and some Russian. This, I am certain, could be speeded up with a little practice.

As to my education, I entered Columbia University during the early part of the World War, and left to serve in the American Ambulance Corps with the French in 1916. Later I served with the U. S. Marine Corps upon the entry of this country into the conflict. After

the war, due to the loss of my father, I was unable to continue my studies in college. However, I have studied several night courses and home study courses, learning among other things, Surveying and Engineering, which has been my profession since 1921. My varied reading, research work and travel, I believe, have broadened my outlook and have rounded out a good general education.

As to salary, I would be glad to start at thirty-five dollars a week.

I sincerely hope that you will look with favor upon my application, and that I may soon know the pleasure of working with you in this our chosen field of endeavor.

Very truly yours,

William L. Clark

EMPLOYMENT RECORD - WILLIAM L. CLARK

Relatives:

Aunt - Mrs. W. G. Ver Planck, 190 Riverside Dr., NYC.
Mother - Mrs. H. S. Clark, Skyland Farm, Harriman, N. Y.
Brother, H. S. Clark, Jr., 512 N. Shepherd St., Richmond, Va.
" F. D. Clark, Veteran's Hospital, Castle Point, N. Y.
Wife's Father, W. M. Bodey, 1077 Nelson Ave., NYC
" Mother, Mrs. W. M. Bodey, " " "

References

D. G. Verwey, Pastor, 1411 Jessup Ave., NYC
L. C. Odell, 1404 " " "
I. Snyderman, Coin dealer, 1 E. 59th St., NYC
M. Wormser, " 95 Fifth Ave., NYC
Harry J. Stein, Attorney, 1440 Bdway, NYC

	Former Employment	Capacity	Address of Immediate Sup.
Feb. 1935 to Mar. 1937,	Park Dept., NYC 158th St. & Riverside Drive, West.	Engineer	Robert McKenzie same
July 1934 to Feb. 1935	Unemployed		
Jan. 1934 to July 1934	Civil Works Admin. New York, N. Y.	"	Unknown
Nov. 1932 to Jan. 1934	Unemployed		
Dec. 1923 to Nov. 1932	G. C. Wheeler 702 W. 181st St. NYC	Chief of Party	same
Apr. 1923 to Dec. 1923	Terry & Tench Co. out of business	Transit Man	unknown
June 1922 to Feb. 1923	Todd, Robertson, Tood Eng. Corp., New York, N.Y.	Rodman in Survey group	unknown

UNION REFORMED CHURCH OF HIGHBRIDGE
OGDEN AVENUE near 169th STREET
NEW YORK CITY

Rev. Daniel G. Verwey, *Minister*
1411 JESUP AVE., N. Y., N. Y.
Phone: TOpping 2-4192

William Clark, *Treas.*
Lewis C. Odell, *Financial Sec*
Richard Turnbull, *Clerk*

ESTABLISHED 1860

March 1, 1937.

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that I have known Mr. William Clark for the past twenty years. He has been a member of the church during all these years and for the past eleven years he has served as our treasurer and is still acting in that capacity.

I am glad to bear witness to his sterling qualities. He is a splendid Christian gentlemen, honest and upright, reliable and willing, capable and trustworthy in assuming large responsibilities. I would regard him as a real asset to any organization that could make use of his services.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel G. Verwey

Daniel G. Verwey

156 East 79th. Street
New York City, N.Y.

March 1st. 1937

American Numismatic Society
155 Street and Broadway
New York City.

Dear Sirs:

I understand that Mr. William Clark is an applicant for a position with your Society, I have known Mr. Clark for many years and his father and family also. He is a man of good character, married with one child, while I do not know the character of the work that he is expected to do, I feel sure if honesty and loyalty are all that is necessary that he is certainly qualified for the position.

I might add that I cannot from what I know of Mr. Clark conceive of his applying for a position that he was not sure he could fill.

Yours sincerely

C Wickliffe Throckmorton

C.Wickliffe Throckmorton

70-10 Continental Avenue
Forest Hills, L. I.
March 4, 1937

TO WHOM IT MAY BE OF INTEREST:

This is to certify that I personally have known William L. Clark since April 1935, during which time he has been employed under my supervision as an engineer and surveyor.

Mr. Clark is industrious, efficient and of very good character. I am pleased to recommend him, sincerely believing he will fulfill any responsibilities undertaken.

Robt M Mackenzie

Rob't. M. Mackenzie

RMM/B

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ARTHUR E. OWEN, *Vice-President*
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GEORGE R. M. EWING, *Treasurer*

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JOHN N. LUFF

February 28th, 1937.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator,
The American Numismatic Society,
Broadway and 155 Street,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Wood:-

Mr. William L. Clark has asked me to give him a letter of reference to you, in connection with his application for the position of Asst. Curator in your institution.

I hardly think this necessary as you must undoubtedly know Mr. Clark on account of his activities with the Bronx Coin Club. He is also a member of your society and the American Numismatic Association.

I have known for the past several years of his interest and work in coins and enjoyed seeing a lot of his material which evinced a rather considerable ability in the selection, care and arrangement of material. I understand he is a N.Y.S. licensed surveyor and a practcal civil engineer working with the Park Dept. of the City of New York.

I therefore cheerfully commend him for your consideration and feel assured that he is able to meet your every requirement.

Your very truly,

Arthur W. Deas

Arthur W. Deas.

The American Numismatic Association

Federal Charter Granted 1912

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38 Charles Street Jamestown, N. Y.
RAGNAR CEDERLUND, 1st Vice Pres.
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OFFICE OF THE TREASURER
12 Highland Ave., Jersey City, N. J.

March 2nd 1937

American Numismatic Society,
156th Street, West Of Broadway,
New York City.

Attention of Mr. Howland Wood.

Gentlemen:

It is my understanding that Mr. William L. Clark of New York City has applied to you for the position of Assistant Curator, and has offered my name as reference.

In regard to this matter I would say that I have known Mr. Clark for a number of years, since my entry into the Bronx Coin Club.

He is on the Board of Governors of that club and a regular attendant at the meetings.

He has exhibits at all meetings, sometimes very numerous, and ably explains them all.

He has a genial manner and is popular with the members.

Believing that he could ably meet your requirements for the position indicated, I take pleasure in recommending him to your favorable consideration.

Yours truly,

George H. Blake

GEORGE C. WHEELER

ALBERT E. WHEELER

G. C. & A. E. WHEELER
CIVIL ENGINEERS AND CITY SURVEYORS
702 WEST 181ST STREET
(S. W. COR. BROADWAY)

TELEPHONE
WAshington Heights 7-1085

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND
LAND SURVEYORS
LICENSED BY STATE OF N. Y.

RIVERDALE OFFICE
WALDO AVE. AND WEST 244TH ST.
(FIELDSTON)

IN REPLYING
PLEASE REFER TO No.

NEW YORK, Nov. 22, 1932.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. William L. Clark entered our employ nine years ago as a transitman and soon worked up to the position of Chief of Party. He has had a greatly varied field experience covering all kinds of surveying from rough topography, cross-sections, etc., to the most precise traverse and building line work, together with preparing of survey maps and reports, contract estimates, etc..

During the progress of street improvements and other developments he has assisted in supervising construction and the issuing of certificates for payments, etc..

We have found that he has always carried through the work entrusted to him in the most efficient manner, meeting all responsibilities, using good judgment and serving us faithfully in every way.

Owing to the present unfavorable conditions in the real estate market and the shutting down of public improvements we are compelled to reduce our engineering force and regret having to dispense with Mr. Clark's services.

We take pleasure in recommending him for a responsible surveying or engineering position requiring expert services with devotion to the interest of his employer.

G. C. & A. E. WHEELER.

By Geo. C. Wheeler

WILLIAM JAY SCHIEFFELIN
620 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK

March 1st 1937

American Numismatic Society,

Gentlemen, I think Mr. William L. Clark is well qualified to serve as Curator.

I have known him since he was a boy: he is in every sense a gentleman.

He has a high character

and is courteous and in-
telligent.

He belongs to an old,
respected family.

He is well educated,
as an engineer, and has a
good record.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jay Schieffelin